

Public Health Annual Report 2015

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Introduction

As interim Director of Public Health I have a duty to publish an annual report about the health of people in Sefton.



Last year, the annual report focused on child and maternal health. A number of the aims from this report have been met or are ongoing, such as the safe transfer of Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership commissioning from NHS England to the council. However, since completing the report, the public sector has faced significant financial challenges. I know that partners have strived to work creatively to ensure that services and support of the highest standard can be delivered to individuals and communities who need it most.

As austerity measures begin to impact on communities many of those working with families fear that the gains we have made in health improvement will stall and the gap in health inequalities will widen. With this in mind I have chosen to focus this year's report on how Sefton is responding to the challenge of austerity and what we must all do to support good health in tough times.

In October 2015 representatives from the voluntary, community and faith sectors along with staff from the Local Authority, the Health Service, and other public bodies as well as some of our Elected Members attended my Public Health Annual Report Health Summit. This report captures the local understanding of just how austerity policies might change people's life circumstances and how this in turn affects their ability to maintain good health. You can see from the illustrations that as well as the obvious concerns regarding smoking and alcohol use, there was an agreement that many individuals and families face the challenge of reduced income, difficulties in meeting rent and fuel payments and concerns relating to social isolation and crime in some parts of Sefton.

However, it is also apparent that Sefton has a wealth of dedicated volunteers and professionals who are expert and experienced sources of support. I hope this report captures the drive and energy of the many agencies that came from across Sefton to share stories of how they worked with communities to improve health. There is only space here to tell a few of those stories, but the report website will include all of the stories shared on the day, with details of how you can get more information.

What follows is a vivid picture of what living in tough times means for people living in Sefton that should help us develop more responsive services.



Participants at the summit identified a number of key actions for those responsible for commissioning and delivering local services. Partners across the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS, Voluntary Community and Faith sector and others are asked to commit to these commissioning and delivery recommendations. The pressure on budgets and resource drives the need to work together. The message from the summit should be a positive one in that we already have a sound base for collaboration and that partners are able and willing to do more.

Margaret Jones

Interim Director of Public Health

February 2016

Message from Councillor Ian Moncur, Cabinet Member

"Welcome to Sefton Council's 2015 Public Health Annual Report.

All Directors of Public Health in England are required to produce an independent annual report on the health of their population, highlighting key issues.



This report provides an opportunity to review, reflect on and – in many cases – celebrate all the work that has gone on across the borough.

Some of the key issues in this report include how austerity measures are having an adverse effect on the health and wellbeing of Sefton residents. This can be seen in the increasing number of people seeking help to maintain basic needs for good health such as housing, heating and healthy food.

However, we are working hard together to support families and communities by pulling together to provide practical and timely assistance when they need it.

In terms of looking ahead, we face continued austerity and the uncertainty of the impact of welfare reform. It is vital that we continue to look for new opportunities to support people through these tough times. This is something we will continue to look at for the interests of all our residents.

Finally the report gives us a chance to consider the opportunities and challenges ahead as Public Health continues to be at the forefront at Sefton Council.

As portfolio holder for Public Health I commend this report and hope you enjoy reading it. Please do get in touch with any feedback or suggestions for topics to cover in future reports."

What is Austerity?

These are actions that aim to control increasing government budget deficits. There are two approaches to achieving this. The first is to reduce public spending e.g. reducing welfare benefits, reduce public services, and reduce local authority budgets. The second is to increase taxation.



What do we know about the impact of austerity on health?

Evidence suggests that austerity is associated with severe material deprivation. People may experience food and fuel poverty as well as homelessness. There have also been reports of increased rates of infectious disease and research from the UK shows that premature deaths are associated with reductions to Local Authority budgets.

How have national austerity policies impacted Sefton?

In the first 25 weeks of the year in South Sefton, 2,723 adults and 2,010 children have used a foodbank.



Over a third of these uses were due to low income, while another third were due to benefit delays or changes in benefits.

Homelessness has increased in Sefton in recent years; however the data available is limited. The phenomenon of 'hidden homelessness', such as 'sofa-surfing', and the different groups it affects is largely unknown.

However, we do know that between October 2014 and March 2015, the housing support service Light for Life had 1,656 users, of which 30% had issues with homelessness (either immediate homelessness or threatened homelessness).



Working together for better health

Those attending the summit agreed that more people are using services that support them in times of hardship. Families and single people, including those in work were seeking support from Citizens Advice Bureau, foodbanks and housing organisations to find accommodation and budget for necessities such as rent, food and fuel.



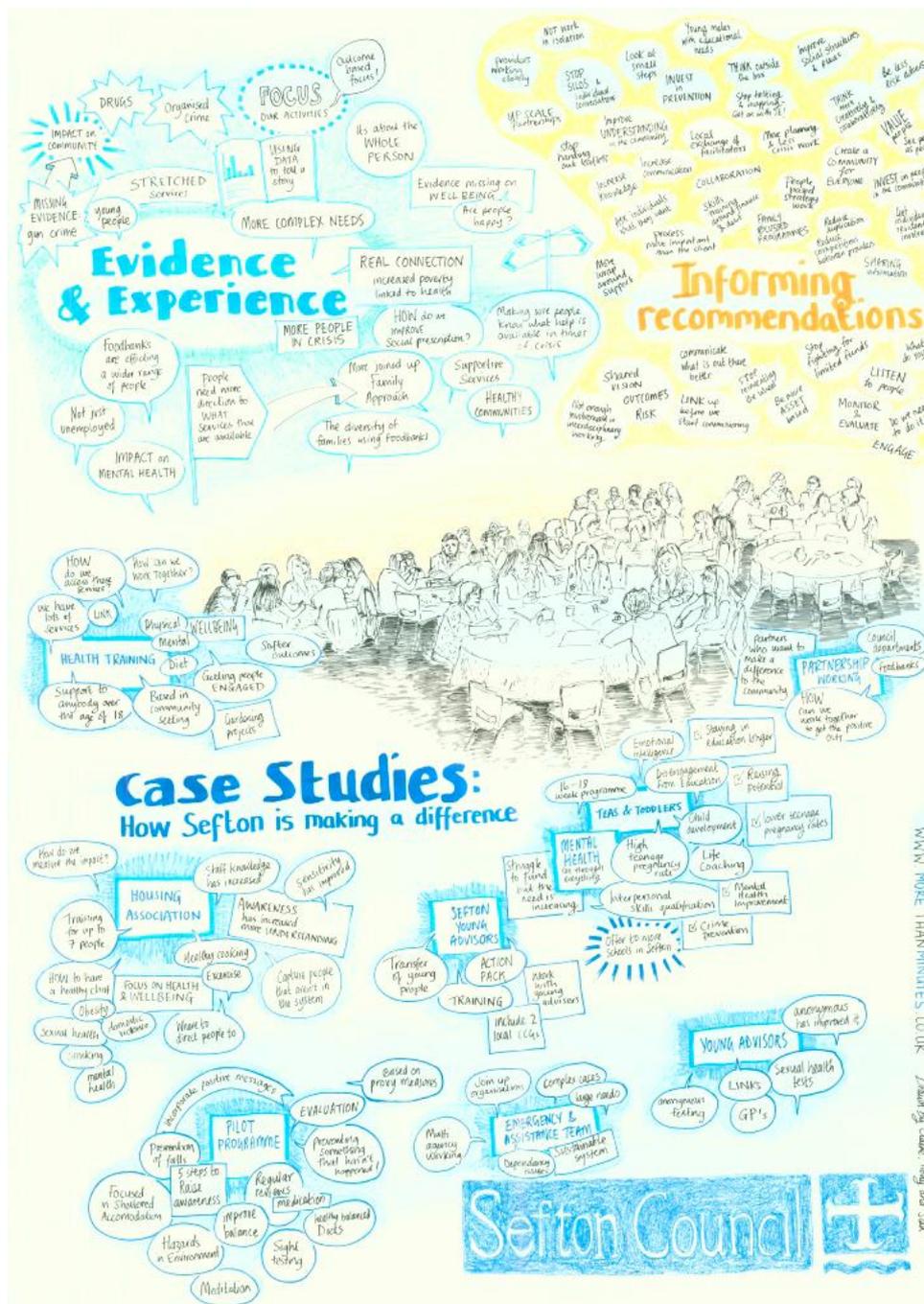
All shared a frustration that health inequalities are persistent within Sefton and called for greater teamwork to address them.

Table top discussions raised some questions that we need to ask:-

- Will demand for these services increase as welfare reforms are implemented?
 - We need to monitor the impact on services.
- Is there any stigma attached to accessing these services?
 - If so, we need to ensure services are provided with sensitivity and dignity.
- Are young adults facing the problems previously seen in older adults such as homelessness, substance misuse?
 - If so, we need to make sure our services can respond in a way that is accessible to younger people.

Many residents have sought support from schemes provided in partnership between the council and local voluntary sector organisations for essentials such as emergency cash, travel and vouchers for gas and electricity “top ups”. The numbers are relatively small, but some families have needed help to buy fridges, cookers and even kettles. These are things most of us take for granted when we are buying and cooking food.

The Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment [Strategic Needs Assessment](#) has been updated and includes detailed information on health and social factors raised in the summit discussions (domestic violence, gun and gang crime, fuel poverty, hospital admissions, injuries, employment, and education). But to fully understand the needs of our communities, participants wanted richer information, especially stories that would give us



A greater understanding of:

- Hard to reach groups or hidden communities impacted by austerity but not seeking help.
- Whether they are getting the support they need?
- Existing support networks that could be developed to help others?
- Whether commissioners and providers of services are working to complement each other?
- The level of co-operation between agencies and whether this is really helping families and communities?
- A better way of measuring wellbeing. How do people really experience health in tough times and how are they managing to deal with problems raised in this report.

Local Stories

Here are just a few great stories of how people in Sefton are making life better for others in their community.

May Logan Health Trainers

Health trainers offer advice and information about improving health and wellbeing to over 18's. They work with individuals to develop a personal health plan. The health trainers can take referrals from local GPs and will also help people move onto other agencies that can provide additional support if needed. Having trainers in the Healthy Living Centre has helped people access services and has encouraged the development of informal groups that meet the needs of the local community. This is a way of working that could be developed across Sefton.



If you want to know more please contact www.maylogan.org.uk

South Sefton and Crosby Foodbank

The Brighter Living Partnership is delivering healthy eating cooking courses to families who have used the South Sefton Foodbank. The sessions involve practical cookery with the opportunity to take home tasty fresh food. As well as developing cooking skills, participants are able to shop more efficiently and healthily. This support could be extended across foodbank distribution centres.



If you want to know more please contact www.brighterliving.org.uk

Sefton Young Advisors

Sefton Young Advisors work on a range of issues. They are currently talking to children and young people across Sefton to find out what they think about mental health and wellbeing.



This will help local services like MerseyCare and the Children's Adolescent Mental Health Service (Alder Hey) be more responsive to the needs of young people in Sefton. The Young Advisors will also help to train staff to improve the care given.

If you want to know more please contact www.sefton.youngadvisors.org.uk/

Plus Dane Housing

Age Concern, Hugh Baird College, Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens and Sefton Pensioner Advocacy Service have come together to deliver this project. It tackles social isolation in older people by involving them in a range of activities including, trips out, "cook off" and "get active" events. It also encourages more able residents to support the project. This has led to reduced dependency on health and other services, less isolation and improved relationship building among older people. This approach could be replicated with other tenant groups.



If you want to know more please contact www.plusdane.co.uk

Formby/Hightown/Freshfield Hub

The Hub brings older members of the community together with a number of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. It provides a meeting place to share information on social and leisure support to combat social isolation. Each of the 4 Hub locations has a trained 'champion'. It also offers a befriending service and believes this approach has increased access to clubs and services among older people and helped reduce social isolation. The project is working to improve self-sustainability of the project and to increase the numbers of users.

Where do we go from here?

Here are some of the thoughts captured on the day. A more detailed list of the comments and recommendations can be found on the Annual Report webpage. We now need to take them forward to support families and communities in Sefton to keep healthy in these tough times.

What should we be doing more of?

For individuals

"Make every contact count—be prepared to help people with all their problems and be prepared to signpost and get other support"

For communities & Sefton

"Empower people to do more for themselves; 1) sustainability, 2) self-sufficiency, 3) own their wellbeing"

As a whole

"Engaging people to be at the heart of services and what we do together for Sefton"

What are we not doing enough of?

"Eliminating competition between organisations and working together!"

What should we stop?

"Being negative – have a more can do attitude!"

"Stop putting up barriers between organisations"

"Working in isolation—work more collaboratively"

For Better Communities

The evidence gathered at the PHAR summit challenges all of us across Sefton to continue working together to improve services and protect the most vulnerable people and communities. My challenge to partners is to respond to the recommendations below and ensure that we keep working together in these tough times.



1. We need to agree the best way to measure the impact of austerity on people living in Sefton. This will help us decide what to do to help people where it matters most.
2. The Council and the NHS should always work together to provide the best possible social, health and wellbeing services.
3. Services should be designed through working together. The people of Sefton's voice needs to be heard and valued along with those who deliver services.
4. Services should work together to reduce duplication and service competition, and this way of working should be at the forefront of all partnership working.
5. All partners should commit to developing "communities of practice" – this is a forum for services to share good practice, exchange ideas and solve problems together.
6. Promote and reward new ideas amongst service providers.
7. All services working with the public should be prepared to make every contact count. *For example, Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is a simple approach that helps improve health. It is a method that supports & encourages conversations that help people consider ways to improve their own health. Organisations can train and support their staff to deliver this.*
8. Involve communities, and encourage self support and support from others in the community.
9. We should all focus on what works well, not what is wrong, and share this.

Good Health in Tough Times

The summit has shown that local people are feeling the impact of austerity measures. However, it also demonstrated the creativity and commitment that communities as well as the voluntary and public services use to support people when they find themselves in times of need. All those who attended the summit expressed a wish to work more closely together to put the needs of Sefton families first. I would encourage everyone to follow that lead.

Thanks

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution in organising the summit and helping to produce the report:

Anna Nygaard, Rachael Musgrave, Alan McGee, Julie Murray, Paula Bennett, Julie Campbell-Stenhouse, Jayne Vincent, June McGill, Tracy Rooney, Andy Hebdidge, Linda Turner, Phil McHale, Charlotte Smith and all those agencies and community representatives who participated on the day.

Useful information

The following websites will provide further information:-

Local services	
NHS Choices	www.nhs.uk
Sefton Council	www.sefton.gov.uk
Sefton Council Directory of Services	www.seftondirectory.com
Sefton ISIS (Integrated Sexual Health Service)	www.isis.sefton.nhs.uk
Alcohol Concern	www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
Lifeline Sefton (Substance Misuse Treatment and Alcohol Recovery Service)	www.lifelinereview14.co.uk/service/sefton-stars/
NHS Smokefree	www.nhs.uk/smokefree
Healthy Sefton	www.healthysefton.nhs.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.seftoncab.org.uk
Local stories	
Sefton Young Advisors	www.sefton.youngadvisors.org.uk
May Logan Healthy Living Centre	www.maylogan.org.uk
Plus Dane Housing	www.Plusdane.co.uk
Sefton Opera	www.sefton-opera.org.uk
St. Leonard's Youth & Community Centre	www.stleonardsyouthandcommunitycentre.com
Alder Hey Children's NHS Trust	www.alderhey.nhs.uk
Partners	
South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group	www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk
Southport & Formby Clinical Commissioning Group	www.southportformbyccg.org.uk
Sefton Council for Voluntary Services	www.seftoncvcs.org.uk
Public Health England	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england
NHS England	www.england.nhs.uk

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